



Dear Chairs Linehan and Anwar, Vice Chairs Welander and Bradley, Ranking Members Martin and Dauphinais, and Members of the Committee on Children,

My name is Josh Guo. I am a resident of New Haven and am testifying to communicate my strong support for Connecticut's SB2: *An Act Concerning The Safety, Education And Social Equity Of Children In Response To The Pandemic*.

Throughout my time at the Yale Education Tutoring Initiative, I've had the opportunity to witness the struggles that New Haven students, especially those of color and in low income families, face every day. The pandemic has only exacerbated these existing inequities, as many families lack basic access to reliable Internet (29000 students in CT don't have reliable access to WiFi, while 50000 don't have access to an electronic device), or good computers that they can consistently operate Zoom from. This is why we need the remote learning provisions in this bill to improve learning conditions for countless families across Connecticut, especially since social isolation and loss of in-person services from the pandemic has increased mental health issues and suicide rates among teens.

The effects of this pandemic, especially in children and adolescents will be felt for years, even after everyone has returned to in-person learning. SB2 seeks to address mental health challenges of CT's students by establishing mental health training for many school employees and licensed healthcare professionals. Funding data shows that lower-income students and students of color are disproportionately impacted by the current lack of mental health access in schools. Passing this bill would be a crucial step in addressing and improving the social-emotional and educational outcomes of all students in the state.

I strongly support SB 2 and urge you to favorably vote the bill out of the Committee on Children.

Sincerely,

Josh Guo
New Haven, CT